

Book Publishing Checklist and Approximate Costs

This presumes a paperback book, POD (print on demand) and ebook. POD means that when someone orders your book, say from Amazon.com, the book is printed and shipped at that time. There are no books sitting in a warehouse (or your garage). However, you may purchase books at-cost and sell them yourself.

The estimated costs may frighten you, but consider that a traditional publisher figures its cost of producing a book to be \$25,000 or more. A self-/indie publisher who does it “right” can spend \$5,000 to \$10,000; most of that expense is for professional services for editing, proofreading, and graphic design.

Publishing a book requires multiple steps:

- Write the manuscript
- Read & critique — join a writing group; hire a professional editor
- Edit the manuscript — highly recommended that you hire a professional editor; editors typically charge by the hour or the word; cost depends on the length and quality of the manuscript; the mss may need multiple edits
- Proofread the manuscript
- Cover design and layout
- Interior design and layout for printing
- Printing
- Marketing and promotion
- Distribution and sales

Costs involved:

- Read & Critique \$200 to \$400
- Editing \$1000 to \$2000
- Proofreading \$400 to \$1,000
- Custom cover design \$400 to \$1,000
- Custom interior design/layout \$400 to \$1,000
(You may upload a Word file, but I don't recommend it.)

- ISBN (book's “serial number”)
 - single = \$125, block of 10 = \$250
(from Bowker, you own it)
 - free from Create Space (you don't own it)
- LCCN (Library of Congress Control Number) — free from LOC
- Printing \$4-\$5 per book, paperback, POD
- Copyright registration \$35 (if you do it yourself)
- Project management \$150 to \$300 (unless you do it yourself)
- Publicity (through a PR firm) \$2,500 and up

E-book Publishing:

- Conversion to epub \$100 to \$500 (variables include # of images or photos, complexity of the layout, special requirements)
You can upload a Word file, but I don't recommend it.
- Upload to Kindle, Smashwords free if DIY
- Custom cover design \$200 to \$500 (no back cover required)
- ISBN — the book's "ID" single = \$125; block of 10 = \$250
[note: ISBN is not required for a Kindle version (.mobi), but recommended; a separate ISBN would be required for an "epub" version (e.g., Apple iBooks, Nook, et al.); libraries and some retail outlets require an ISBN; if you later offer the book in print, you will need an ISBN, and each format requires a unique number]
- Setup fee with online services such as Kindle, Smashwords \$0.00
- Download fee 15 cents/megabyte (Amazon, others vary)

Pricing:

E-books typically are priced between \$2.99 and \$9.99. This is because of the revenue-sharing model (in U.S.; other nations will vary):

Vendor	Retail Price	Author %	Vendor %
Kindle	\$0.99 to \$2.98	30	70
	\$2.99 to \$9.99	70	30
Nook	\$10.00 and up	30	70
	\$0.99 to \$2.98	40	60
	\$2.99 to \$9.99	65	35
	\$10.00 and up	40	60

The other vendors have similar pricing models. Smashwords pays the highest (85%), but only for books sold on the Smashwords site. For ebooks distributed to other vendors, Smashwords drops the rate to a maximum of 65%.

Vendors: Kindle, Nook, Apple iBooks, Kobo, and Sony are the primary e-book vendors; Smashwords makes it easy to distribute to all of the major vendors, although I recommend that you set up Kindle separately. The majority of the ebooks sold are likely to be via Amazon as Kindle books, so that should be the primary focus.